

Dwight's Journal of Music,

A Paper of Art and Literature.

WHOLE No. 191.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1855.

VOL. VIII. No. 9.

Dwight's Journal of Music, PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

TERMS: By Mail, \$2 per annum, in advance.
When left by Carrier, \$2,50

J. S. DWIGHT, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

EDWARD L. BALCH, PRINTER.

OFFICE, No. 21 School Street, Boston.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED

At the OFFICE OF PUBLICATION, No. 21 School St. Boston.
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Chat with Rossini.

BY FERDINAND HILLER.

Translated for this Journal from the *Zeitung* of Cologne.

II.

—These journalists! exclaimed ROSSINI, one day. Here has one of them been printing how, when I left Paris recently, I manifested almost as great an aversion to the railroad as to German music! What do they mean by that?

—That you would travel a great deal by railroad, dear maestro, were that true, I answered.

—Not only do I love the great German masters; I have made them my especial study in my earliest youth, and have let no opportunity go by to learn to know them more and more. How much delight you have already afforded me through the performance of BACH's compositions!

—I have never played his noble piano pieces with more pleasure, than when I was able to play them before you.

—What a colossal nature, this Bach! In such a style to write this mass of compositions! It is incomprehensible. What to others was hard, nay, impossible, was mere play to him. How is it about that fine edition of his works? I first heard of it through a family from Leipsic, who visited me in Florence, and probably through their mediation two of the volumes came to me. But I should like to have the following ones.

—Nothing is easier. You must subscribe.

—With all my heart!

—Your name among the members of the Bach society—that would be too good!

—Bach's portrait in the first volume is splendid, resumed Rossini; there is an extraordinary intellectual power expressed in it. Bach must have also been an eminent virtuoso.

—The most important composers of the present

day are happy, when they have learned to play some of his pieces well—he improvised such, said I.

—The like of him is seldom born. Do you bring out many of his works in Germany?

—Not so many as we should—but yet a good many.

—Alas! such a thing is not possible in Italy, and less than ever now, complained Rossini. We cannot, as you do in Germany, collect great choirs of amateurs. Formerly we had good vocal forces in churches and chapels—that is all lost. Even in the Sixtine chapel, since the death of BAINI, things have continually retrograded. *Apropos*, how stands it with the controversy about the genuineness of MOZART's *Requiem*? Have they arrived, of late, at any sure results?

—No further than you already know.

—No other man but Mozart made that *Confutatio*, at all events, exclaimed the maestro, singing over the beginning. That is magnificent! And the *solto voce* at the end! Those modulations! I always had a special partiality for the *solto voce* in chorus—but in this one, whenever I have heard it, I felt the icy chill creep down my back.—*Pauvre Mozart!*

—In a certain Biography, which concerns you particularly, it is stated that Mozart hardly ever laughed three times in his life. What say you to such nonsense? There are several things said there which you must explain to me. Is it true, for instance, that you asked your old teacher, the padre MATTEI, a short time since, whether you yet knew enough to write an opera, and upon his answering in the affirmative, that you got up and walked away?

—Nothing could be less true! I had studied three years at the Lyceum in Bologna, during which time, however, I had to do my utmost to pay for my instruction and support my parents. I succeeded, but it was in a pretty beggarly manner. I accompanied the recitative at the piano at the theatre, and got six paoli a night for it. I had a fine voice, and sang in the churches. Also I composed, besides the exercises which Mattei gave me, here and there a profane piece for a singer to introduce into an opera or sing in a concert; for example, for ZAMBONI and others, who gave me a trifle for the service. Now when I had toiled through Counterpoint and Fugue, I asked Mattei what he would set before me next. The Plain Chant and Canon was the reply. How much time shall I have to spend on them? About two years. But I was not able to keep on so long, and that I explained to the good Padre, who understood the case very well, and always remained attached to me. I myself have lamented, often enough since, that I had not labored longer under his care.

—You were able to make your way through, even without the canon, said I, laughing. Was Mattei a very able teacher?

—He was excellent with the pen in his hand—his corrections were exceedingly instructive. But he was terribly monosyllabic, and every oral elucidation had almost to be torn from him by force.—Have you seen any of his compositions?

—I have never come across anything of his.

—If you are ever again in Bologna, do not fail to take a look into them at the Lyceum. They are only church music, and the solo passages are not remarkable; but the *pleni*, as we Italians call it, are excellent.

—I must come back to your youthful days, dear maestro. You certainly composed much before you came under the tuition of Mattei?

—A whole opera, *Demetrio e Polibio*, which in the series of my works has always been named later, replied Rossini, because it was first publicly performed, after some other dramatic attempts, four or five years after it was written. I composed it originally for the Mombelli family, without ever knowing that it was an opera. When I had begun my studies with Mattei, I was unable, during the first months, to bring any thing more to pass; I trembled at every bass note, and every middle part gave me a little shudder. Afterwards I recovered my early confidence.

—That was very fortunate. Had you begun already in Pesaro to learn music?

—I had left Pesaro in my earliest childhood. My father held the situation there in the Commune of town-trumpeter, he played the horn in the theatre, and all that went on decently enough until the arrival of the French, when he lost his place. My mother, who had a fine voice, availed herself of it to help us out of trouble, and so we left Pesaro.—The poor mother! She was not without talent, although she did not know a note. She sang as *orecchiante*, as we call it; that is, altogether by ear. I may say, *en passant*, the same is the case with eighty out of a hundred Italian singers.

—That is inconceivable!

—It is strange. To learn to warble a cavatina after another seems an easy affair; but how these people go to work to learn by heart the middle parts in *ensemble* pieces, is to me quite a puzzle.

—They must be either very musical or very unmusical; but pray, let us come back to yourself, said I, a little impatiently. Where did you begin to learn music?

—At Bologna.

—And with whom?

—A certain PRINETTI, of Novara, gave me instruction on the Spinnet. He was a remarkable fellow. He manufactured some sort of *liqueur*, gave a few music lessons, and so worked his way

along. He never owned a bed—he slept standing.

—What, standing? You joke, maestro.

—It is precisely as I tell you. At night he wrapped himself up in his mantle, leaned against some corner of an arcade, and so went to sleep. The watchmen knew him and did not disturb him. Then he came at a very early hour to me, pulled me out of bed, which I did not relish much, and set me to playing. Sometimes he had not rested sufficiently, and slept while I worked away upon the spinet, all the while standing. I took advantage of the opportunity, and crept back into my feather bed. When he woke up and sought me there again, he was pacified by my assurance that I had played my piece through without mistakes during his slumber. His method was not exactly the most modern; thus, for example, he made me play the scale with the thumb and the forefinger only.

—That seems to have hurt you quite as little as your neglect of the canon. But who, besides him, were your first teachers?

—A certain ANGELO TESI taught me how to play figured bass, *l'accompagnamento*, and exercised me in *soffeggi*. A tenor, formerly of some note, BABINI, gave me the higher instructions in singing.

—You had a charming voice?

—I sang quite finely as a boy. At that time I went once upon the stage and performed the boy's part in the *Camilla* of PAER. But I did not get beyond that.

—Were any other notable artists among your schoolmates at the Lyceum? I inquired.

—The first year which I passed there was the last year of MORLACCHI's studies, and my third year was the first year of DONIZETTI.

—I thought that DONIZETTI was a pupil of SIMON MAIR.

—He had made all sorts of attempts with him, but he received his real musical culture in Bologna. And that he learned something clever, no one will deny.

—Certainly not. But you must tell me a little more of your earliest youth time, dear maestro.—I am not easily satisfied in such things.

—Another time, *cara Ferdinando*. There comes my wife; it is our dinner time. After dinner let us smoke a cigar together!

[To be continued.]

Life of John Sebastian Bach;

WITH A CRITICAL VIEW OF HIS COMPOSITIONS, BY J. N. FOKKEL.

(Continued from p. 59.)

What has hitherto been said refers chiefly to Bach's compositions for the clavichord and organ; but now perhaps the reader may like to hear a few remarks as to his vocal works. It was at Weimar he first found occasion to try his powers on vocal composition. Here he was appointed leader of the band, and as such it was his province to furnish church music for the court chapel. The style of his church music, like that of his organ pieces, was solemn, devout, and such in every respect as church music should be. He also adopted the very right principle of not studying the effect of single words, which is indeed but mere trifling, but sought to give the expression of the whole. His chorusses are throughout magnificent and solemn. He often formed them by choosing a choral melody, and making the other parts accompany in fugues after the manner of motets. They have the same richness of harmony as his other works, only adapted to suit the vocal parts and instrumental accompaniments. His recitative

is musical declamation provided with rich basses. In his airs, many of which are full of expressive melody, he seemed to have been shackled by the necessity of conforming to the abilities of the performers, who, nevertheless, made ceaseless complaints of their difficulty. If he had been so fortunate as to have had more able performers of his church music, it would have certainly left deeper impressions of its excellence, and have been like his other works still used and admired. The exhaustless stores of Art which they contain would have been thought worthy of longer preservation. Among many occasional pieces which he composed at Leipsic, I must mention two—one of which was performed at Coethen at the interment of his beloved Prince Leopold, the other at St. Paul's church at Leipsic at the funeral sermon, on the death of Christiana Eberhardine, Queen of Poland and Electress of Saxony. The former contains choruses of great magnificence, and of the most touching expression; the latter has only single chorusses, but they are so charming that he who begins to play one of them will never get up till he has finished it. It was written October 1727. Besides these Bach composed a great many motets, principally for the choir of St. Thomas's school at Leipsic. This choir consisted of fifty singers and sometimes more, for whose musical improvement Bach provided like a father, and gave them such constant practice in motets, for one, two, and more voices, that in time they became both good and correct choir singers. Among them, motets for two chorusses, written with this intent, which surpass everything of this kind in richness of harmony and melody, and also in life and spirit; but like all Bach's works, or rather like all great and excellent works of Art, they are difficult of execution, and must, to produce their due effect, be performed by a full orchestra. These are the most important of Bach's vocal compositions. For the inferior branch of Art contributing to social entertainment, he has done little or nothing; notwithstanding his friendly and sociable disposition. He is said, for instance, never to have composed a song. For this, however, a Bach was not wanted. These pleasing little productions of Art will never become extinct; Nature herself produces them, even without the plan of laborious culture.

CHAPTER VI.

There are many talented composers and clever amateurs of all instruments who are never the less incapable of teaching others what they know either theoretically or practically. Either they have not bestowed sufficient attention on the practice which developed their natural powers, or by dint of good teaching they have attained to a certain degree of technical ability without inquiring of their teacher why such and such things must be done in a certain manner and not otherwise. When such performers are well taught their practice may be very instructive to beginners, but they cannot impart instruction, properly so called. The tedious course of self-instruction, in which the student follows a thousand devious tracks ere he discover the right one, is perhaps the only method of forming a really good teacher. His frequent fruitless efforts and errors bring him gradually acquainted with all the resources of his art; he discovers every impediment to his advancement and learns how to avoid it. This method is the longest, it is true, but he who has the courage to pursue it, will, as the reward of his persevering toil, learn to attain his end by a means which will be more agreeable. All those who have founded a school of music of their own, have accomplished it by such fatiguing means. The new and more pleasing road was that which distinguished their school from others; and such and so distinguished was the school of Bach. He who knows much can alone teach much. He alone, who has made himself acquainted with dangers, and has himself attacked and overcome them, can successfully teach others how to avoid them. Bach did both; his teaching was in consequence the most instructive, sure, and beneficial that was ever known. All his pupils trod, in one or other branch of the art, in the footsteps of their great master, though none ever equalled,

still less surpassed him. I will first speak of his instructions in playing. His first aim was to teach his pupils his own peculiar touch, of which we have before spoken. To this end he made them practice, for months together, nothing but simple passages for all the fingers of both hands, with constant attention to a clear and distinct touch. None could escape these exercises under some months constant practice, and it was his unalterable opinion that they should be continued from six months to twelve. But when he found, after some months, any one beginning to lose patience, he obligingly wrote for them little connected pieces in which these same exercises were combined together. Such were his "Six little Preludes for Beginners," and the "Fifteen two-part Inventions." Both were written down during the hours of teaching, in compliance with the momentary want of the scholar, but he afterwards improved them into beautiful and expressive compositions. With this exercise of the fingers, in either single passages or in little compositions of the same kind, he combined the practice of ornaments and graces with both hands. After this he immediately gave his scholars his greater works, whereon to exercise their strength. And to lessen their difficulties, it was his system to play through to them the piece they were about to study, saying, "This is the style," a system combining many advantages. If by hearing a piece played through with its true character the zeal and inclination of the pupil are awakened, this would be in itself no small advantage; but by giving him at once an idea of what the piece ought to be, and what he has to aim at, the advantage is greater still. The understanding is brought into play, and the fingers act much better under its direction than they could do without it; and many a young performer, who, without this aid, would scarcely know how to make sense of such a piece at the end of a year's practice, would learn it very easily in a month, if having it played to him he had been at once enabled to acquire a just idea of its style and character.

Bach's plan of teaching composition was equally excellent and successful. He did not commence with the dry, unnecessary counterpoints, as did other masters of his time, neither did he hinder his scholars with calculations of the proportions of notes, which were in his opinion more useful to the theorist and instrument-maker than the composer. He proceeded at once to pure thorough bass in four parts, insisting particularly that these parts should be written out separately, as the best means of rendering the idea of the pure progression of the harmony evident to the learner. He then proceeded to choral melodies, or psalm tunes, to which he at first set the basses himself, leaving only to the pupils to invent the alto and tenor to them. By degrees he let them set the basses alone. He constantly insisted, not only on the greatest degree of purity in the harmony itself, but also on natural connection, and flowing melody in all the parts. It is well known what models he himself produced of this kind; his middle parts are often so smooth and melodious that they might be used as upper parts; he made his pupils aim at the like excellencies in all their exercises, and till they had attained a great degree of perfection in them he did not suffer them to attempt inventions of their own. Their sense of purity, order, and connection in the parts must first have been tried on the inventions of others, and have become in a manner habitual to them, before he conceived them capable of applying these qualities to their compositions. He took it for granted that all his pupils were qualified to think musically, and those who had not this necessary qualification were sincerely and earnestly advised by him not to attempt composition. And accordingly he refrained from beginning with his sons, as well as any of his other pupils, in the study of composition till he had seen attempts of theirs, in which he thought he could espy this musical ability or genius. Then when the before mentioned preparations in harmony were ended, he took up the study of fugues, beginning with those in two parts, and so on. In all these exercises in composition he kept his pupils strictly so. 1st. To compose entirely from the mind, without the aid of an instrument, and those

who wished to do otherwise, he termed, in ridicule, "Harpichord Knights." 2ndly. To pay constant attention, as well to the consistency of each single part, in and for itself, as with regard to its relation to the parts connected and concurrent with it. No part, not even a middle part, was allowed to break off before it had entirely and fully expressed all it had to express. Every note was required to have a connection with the preceding. If any one appeared of which it was not clearly evident whence it came, and to what it tended, it was summarily discarded as suspicious. This extreme degree of exactness in the arrangement of every single part, is precisely what marked Bach's harmony a manifold melody. The confusion of parts, by a note belonging to the tenor falling into the counter-tenor, or the reverse; the senseless falling in of several notes in simple harmonies, which, as if dropped from the sky, suddenly increase the number of the parts in a single passage, to vanish again in the next, and having no connection with the whole, is not to be found either in his own compositions or in those of his scholars. He looked upon his parts as persons forming a select company and conversing politely together. If there were three, each could in turn be silent and listen to the others, till he had again something *apropos* to say. But if in the midst of the most interesting part of the conversation, some uncalled for and importunate notes stepped forward, and attempted to say a word, or even a syllable without sense or propriety, Bach regarded this as a great irregularity, and taught his pupils to consider that it was not allowable.

Notwithstanding his strictness in this point, however, he in other respects, allowed his scholars great license. In the use of the intervals, in the turns of the melody and harmony he permitted them to do whatever they could and would, provided only they admitted nothing which could impair the musical euphony, and the perfectly just and unequivocal expression of the sense, for the sake of which all harmony is sought. As he himself attempted whatever was possible, so he liked to see his pupils do the same. Other teachers of composition before him, Berardi, Bononcini, and Fux, for instance, would not permit such liberties. They feared their pupils might get entangled in difficulties; but they thus, it is evident, prevented their learning to overcome difficulties. Bach's mode is therefore unquestionably better, and leads the pupil farther. Those who desire to become acquainted with Bach's method of teaching composition in its fullest extent, may find it duly explained in Kirnberger's "Kunst des reinen Satzes," or "Art of pure Composition." Lastly, as long as his scholars remained under his direction, he did not allow them to study, or even to become acquainted with any but classical works, except his own compositions. The understanding, through which alone we appreciate the really good, develops itself later than the feeling, and even this latter may be misled and vitiated by being frequently employed on inferior productions of Art. The best plan, therefore, in instructing youth is to accustom them betimes to what is excellent. The due appreciation of it comes in time, and their matured judgment confirms their early taste for none but the genuine works of Art.

[To be continued.]

How shall the Orchestra or Choir be Placed?

BERLIN, NOV. 2, 1855.

My Dear Dwight:—In your paper of Nov. 6, 1852, is an article from my pen, the text to which is the bad effect of the singing in the New York Tabernacle on the Sabbath, owing to the position of the singers' seats in respect to each other; rising as they do (or did then) at a very steep pitch, bringing the tenors and basses so high above the female voices that in most parts of the house there was positively no blending of the parts whatever. This led to some remarks upon the proper position of the members of an orchestra, or chorus, or of both, when meeting together in oratorio or other grand performance. Your correspondent, "Legato," two weeks later misunderstood me, and spoke of my "Scheme for ma-

king harmony depend upon the position of the seats." Now I said nothing about harmony, my subject having been the effect of harmony, or the blending of the instruments or voices from which proceed the different tones of which the composer forms his harmony.

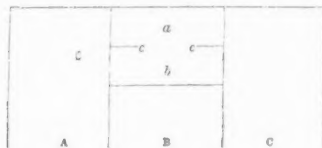
I have never lost sight of this subject, and at all grand musical performances I pay special attention to the point, and that too after reading all I can find which will bear upon the subject in acoustical works and in the long series of English, American and German musical periodicals for the last sixty years. I have never, however, found an article which has this particular point for its topic; but all the laws which regulate the transmission, dispersion and reverberation of sound, bear more or less directly upon it, and lead us theoretically to the conclusion that the effect of a chorus, orchestra, or both combined, *does* depend, in some measure, upon the position in which the various singers and instruments stand to each other.

I shall not trouble you (at this time at all events) with the theoretical discussion of the matter, as I am devoting my fragments of time to the translation of a new and most admirable German work upon musical acoustics, in which a place, I hope, will be found for a discussion of this particular point by an eminent American scientific and mathematical scholar. I shall content myself now with some results of my observations.

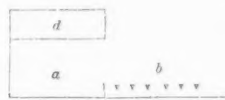
The concert hall of the theatre in Berlin is the place where the royal orchestra give their famous "Sinfonie Soirées." I have also in the same place heard a vocal concert from STERN'S Singing Society, and an instrumental concert by RUBINSTEIN. In this hall the main floor, the narrow gallery on three sides of the room and the broad gallery at one end are perfectly flat. The orchestra is ranged upon a perfectly flat platform, all one and the same floor, there being no rise at all from the first violin to the last trombone.

It follows that we, who sit back of the first row of seats in the broad gallery, never see the performers. We are more than paid; for such blending of all parts, brass, wood and strings, you never heard. That this is not entirely owing to the perfection of the artists engaged, is proved by the fact that this blending was almost as noticeable in Rubinstein's and Stern's picked up orchestras, and that it is not so excellent when the royal orchestra play in the opera house.

LIEBIG's orchestra, both at Hennig's garden and at Maeder's saloon, affords an excellent example to the point. Perhaps your printer can give these few lines, rudely representing the hall at Hennig's, or rather one end of it:



A, B and C are the three long rooms of the concert hall, side by side, and made into one by huge arched openings and doors. *a* and *b* are the level platform, elevated some four feet from the floor, upon which the orchestra is arranged. *a* seems to have been originally intended as the stage for small theatrical performances, as *c c* stand there partly partitioning *a* from *b*, as I have represented. Above *a* is a balcony *d*, or gallery.



Now the violins are ranged upon *b* each side of the director, extending quite across the stage, and the

other strings as nearly in front as possible. The consequence is that the stringed quartet plays freely and directly into the hall. Behind, come first the reed and wood instruments, and back of all the brass and the drums. I promised not to go into theoretical considerations, so I will only say that the blending is remarkable, and the small body of violins, which this orchestra has, balances the rest of the orchestra far better than oftentimes double the number. In Maeder's Saloon, Liebig has a stage constructed precisely in the same manner. The hall is larger, much better constructed acoustically, and the melting of the brass, wood and strings into each other strikes every American as wonderful.

Now per contra. Our new "Orchester-Verein," under Stern, gives its concerts in a new hall much like Maeder's, but with no such recess. Consequently we have the orchestra ranged along against the wall at one end, with nothing to throw—to force the sound waves of the noisy instruments of the back row into and through the sound waves of the others. Though the number of violins is much larger than at Liebig's, they are much less prominent, and the balance not so good. But the effect of the orchestra as a whole, when accompanying the chorus or the solos in the vocal performances, is very fine. The chorus takes the front place, and the vocal tones of course come out into the hall full and fresh, only supported and inter-penetrated by the sounds from the instruments upon nearly the same level behind. Fortunately, I have had opportunity to renew nearly all the observations which I mentioned in my article three years ago. In the Cologne Cathedral, where I was so ravished last autumn with the mass, the singers' gallery is level, and the vocal and instrumental tones are all thrown out into the church in a single body. But one of the most decisive examples is one I formerly referred to, and which within a few weeks back I have had a chance of verifying. I refer to the Garrison church of this city. This edifice is perfectly rectangular, the length being to the width, I should judge, nearly as two to one. A broad gallery runs round of nearly equal width on the sides and at the ends. The difference of the ends is that the one containing the organ has a steep rise, while the other is in three levels, rising each some three feet above the other. The "Messiah" was lately sung at the organ end. The female voices were low in front, and crushed by the weight of the men's voices above them. These in turn were almost crushed by the orchestra high above them, and the drums, trumpets and other loud instruments (Mozart's arrangement being used,) stood out from their lofty pedestal high and distinct from every thing else. The effect was abominable. At another oratorio last week the performers took the other end; it was bad enough in this respect, owing to the separation of the whole into several masses, but by no means so bad as before.

Now, last evening, the oratorio was in the Sing Akademie, and the same singers told a very different story.

In this hall the rise of the seats is very gradual.—The chorus, some 250 to 300, filled all the space up to the level platform. On this, Liebig's orchestra, with additional performers, was arranged in lines extending the entire width of the room, and occupying, with the strings and wood, the whole space. Behind the centre of the stage is a room, separated from the main hall by two superb Grecian columns, sustaining heavy curtains. On this occasion the curtains were removed, and, though there was, in fact, no want of space on the platform, yet all the trumpets, trombones, drums, and the like, were placed in this room. Though the work which was given us has little of HANDEL, HAYDN, or even MENDELSSOHN, in it, yet the perfection of the effect of the vocal and instrumental masses rendered it a very interesting concert. This carrying the brass into the space

back is a new idea. Five years since an unlucky trombone or two and the trumpets used to have a place on the corner of the platform close by the wall, and every time they entered with their sonorous sounds, I shuddered—because they blended with nothing. It was always so in the old Metropolitan Hall in New York. From the concave wall behind the stage, away up above every body else, the brass used to roar you like any thing rather than Bottom's "sucking dove." All chorus singers know how much easier it is to sing when brought together on a level stage, or upon a floor, so that each feels the influence of the mingling and blending of the different parts and voices; all hearers, who have had opportunity to notice, will recollect also the improved effect when the chorus is thus arranged.

In the summer of 1849, I was present at the ceremony of baptizing the new halls of a Catholic church at Bonn. The choir, on this occasion, took its place in the church choir, in front of the grand altar, and the music of PALESTRINA, LASSO, and other ancient masters, never sounded to me more deliciously than on that occasion, when all came to the ear blended into one compact, harmonious mass.

Tuesday evening, in Mozart's "Idomeneus," the chorus numbered about seventy, and in one place in particular they were grouped together on one side of the stage, looking out upon the harbor of Sydonia, and singing of the stillness of the sea. Here again the blending of the voices was perfect; and, in general, a chorus, (that is, a *chorus*, and not a little choir of fourteen or sixteen voices, all told) "makes itself out" better on the stage (in the matter of blending) than in most other places; and yet, no one will pretend to deny that hardly so unpropitious a place for choral singing is to be found as among the scenery and flies of a theatre.

Sounds and tones are delicate things to handle.—And you may rely upon it that voices and instruments depend very much upon their position to each other for the perfection of the general effect—taking all the auditors of a large room into account—notwithstanding the article in your Journal three years ago was the first ever written to call attention to it. The expense of deciding the matter by full experiment, before the great organ comes into the Boston Music Hall, might be defrayed by a concert or two for the purpose, and Boston might have the honor of not only building the best large hall in the world, but of deciding a question which, in these days of large choral societies, is one of importance.

A. W. T.

Musical Correspondence.

NEW YORK, NOV. 27.—Our Philharmonic, under the intelligent and indefatigable drill of CARL BERGMANN, has made rapid strides, so far as light and shade, careful pianissimo, crescendo, and diminuendo, are concerned, and the rendering of Gluck's *Iphigenie* overture, at the first concert for Saturday last, was quite satisfactory, while the *Tannhäuser* also came well out; but the Pastoral Symphony was wanting, strange to say, even in the mechanical part. There was great confusion in the Adagio and the storm scene, especially among the basses, and inaccuracies, which could only result from carelessness on the part of the performers. This may have been owing, in part, to their familiarity with the work, and to a fatiguing rehearsal so recent as the morning of the day of performance. However this may be, the performance of the Pastoral, although well directed, and a decided improvement in the pianissimo passages, was still far from satisfactory. Our Philharmonics must be somewhat less democratic, and more studious; there is no government suited for an orchestra but an absolute one. The solos of the evening were MR. OTTO FEDER, vocalist, and the

Brothers MOLLENHAUER. The latter are unrivaled in a duo, and are always warmly encored; but I confess to having become somewhat satiated with the music they give us. Musical gymnastics, and agility of finger and elbow, lose their attraction by frequent repetition. Mr. Feder is a German baritone, possessing a full, round voice; but the aria from *Paulus* was an unfortunate selection, coming in contrast with the symphony that preceded it.

The Philharmonic society, I am rejoiced to say, is still in the full tide of success. Its subscription list numbers some hundreds more than last year even, and the first concert was really a jam. Niblo's was filled from parquet to dome, and every seat had an occupant, and a *paying* one at that. Is this not encouragement sufficient for an increase in the number of their concerts? Let the government take the Academy of Music, and give us a monthly treat.

The *Prophete* is resumed at the Academy this week, but I have no hopes of this opera's making up for the previous losses of the management. MEYERBEER is not here to see that the most important rôles, (the several spectacles,) are well filled; and without these the opera loses all its attractions. There is a suspicion of a melody in the finale of the third act; also in the coronation march; but you do not get the whole article, and the evidences of "sturdy manufacture" are too evident throughout. Then the *Prophete* was mangled shockingly by the orchestra, for which thanks be to MARETZKE. Really I shall begin to give credence to a report which is whispered about, to the purport that the "indefatigable" Max is dissatisfied that he is not lessee and manager of the establishment, nor his numerous family employed, and is determined that things shall go badly at any rate. *Certes* I have never listened to such conducting before.

The glorious melodies of *Semiramide* were a refreshing contrast to the barrenness of Meyerbeer's last; and afforded another triumph to MME. DE LA GRANGE. How each new rôle adds new laurels to the already abundant wealth won by this talented and wonderful vocalist! In the *floritura*s, and bravuras of ROSSINI she was in her element, and her declamation of the throne scene suffered not by comparison with that of GRISI. This opera was given for the debut of Mlle. NANTIER DIDIEE, our new contralto, the successor of ALBONI, at Covent Garden. Mlle. is young and handsome; her voice, though not so gloriously contralto-ish as that of ALBONI is round and full, and very sympathetic in its higher tones; her method is excellent, and her rendering good, saving a little coldness. The debut was a triumph; her audience were evidently delighted, and her success was undoubted; but the management, in its wisdom, has withdrawn her for the present, and until the excitement raised shall have abated. This is another blunder added to the many already committed.

The first of Messrs. MASON & BERGMANN'S Classical Matinées was most successful, to-day at 2 o'clock. It was an occasion of much interest to our dilettanti and the profession; familiar with Carl Bergmann's excellence as a conductor, much interest was felt to hear a quartet of his training. I think the most sanguine expectations were not disappointed. Dodworth's pleasant hall was completely filled; with the exception of many well known professionals, chiefly with ladies; the audience was so large that many had to stand throughout the performances. It was a very attentive and apparently interested audience, if I may judge from the fact that nearly if not quite all remained during the two hours occupied by the programme, notwithstanding the heat of the room, and also from the applause most heartily given by the fair sex, who usually take no part in such matters. The Quartet prepossessed all in their favor by their personal appearance; young and intelligent, (the first violin, Mr. THOMAS,

is not twenty, I believe, and Mr. MOSENTHAL looks no older,) all had the appearance of enthusiasm for their art.

The programme I enclose to you. You will notice that the selections were all new, to a New York audience at least.

1. Quartet in D minor, for first and second Violin, Viola, and Violoncello. (Œuvre Posthume. 1. Allegro. 2. Andante. 3. Scherzo. 4. Presto. FRAZ SCHUBERT. MESSRS. THOMAS, MOSENTHAL, MATZKA and BERGMANN.
2. Romanza from *Tannhäuser*: "O du mein holder Abendstern," Richard Wagner. MR. OTTO FEDER.
3. a. Fantasia Impromptu. (Œuvre Posthume. F. Chopin. b. Deux Preludes. D flat and G, op. 24. Stephen Heller. MR. WILLIAM MASON.
4. Variations Concertantes for Violoncello and Piano-Forte, opus 17. Mendelssohn. CARL BERGMANN and WILLIAM MASON.
5. Song: "Feldwärts flog ein Vögelchen," O. Nicolai. MR. OTTO FEDER.
6. Grand Trio in B major, opus 8, for Piano-Forte, Violin, and Violoncello. 1. Allegro Moderato. 2. Scherzo. 3. Adagio. 4. Allegro Agitato. Johannes Brahms. MESSRS. MASON, THOMAS and BERGMANN.

I will not undertake any criticism upon the pieces themselves, as the greatest novelty, the BRAHMS Trio will be brought to your own notice during the season. I will only remark that the Trio is not novel in its form or construction, and reminds me, especially in the Adagio, of BEETHOVEN. There is a good deal of taking melody in it, which perhaps was hardly expected from 'Young Germany,' and the Scherzo, particularly, would be attractive to any audience. This composition, as well as SCHUBERT'S Quartet, was heartily relished by all; many of our leading musicians who were present, I noticed listened with great attention and many applauding at the close of each movement.

The performances at the Matinée were throughout highly satisfactory. It was the first appearance of the Quartet in public and after only six weeks of practice together, and I was prepared to make allowances for them. These, however, were unnecessary; in light and shade, in delicate pianissimos, careful diminuendos and crescendos, in boldness and vigor, the rendering of Schubert's Quartet surpassed anything I have heard in America. The close of the Adagio was the most perfect *pianissimo* I remember to have heard. The Duo for 'cello and piano was good; BERGMANN'S instrument gave out a sonorous and rich tone, which was not too much (as at times it had been in the quartet for the violins.) for the piano forte. But the Trio was perhaps the best rendered of all; Mr. MASON played with a fire and vigor; a spirit, that left all thought of mere technicals far behind—such as he had not been supposed capable of, and he was ably seconded by Messrs. Thomas and Bergmann.

The is now reason for hope that a taste for classical music may pervade our city. With the Philharmonic Concerts, the Soirées of Mr. EISEL, and these Matinées of Messrs. Mason and Bergmann, opportunity will not be wanting to hear something higher than ear-tickling Italian melodies, or feet-moving waltzes, polkas and schottisches; in short, that which is really music, the poetry, the soul of music. MILAMO.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, DEC. 1, 1855.

First Orchestral Concert.

The first of these festivals of great instrumental music, (for such they truly may be called, to distinguish them from the common run of miscellaneous and "star" concerts.) took place on Saturday evening. It was a great success, so far as character of music and of audience went, though not decisive as to the will or the ability of Boston to support good music on so grand a scale. We

have seen larger and more paying audiences in years past for concerts on the same plan, when it has not been half so well carried out as it was this time. Whether the public taste has retrograded or not, we cannot say; but, certain it is, that the twelve hundred in the Music Hall that evening, ought to have drawn twice that number with them to make good the old music-loving character of Boston. Howbeit the twelve hundred showed themselves the most appreciative for such a number, that we can remember upon any such occasion. Such attention, such discriminating applause, such pervading sympathetic satisfaction, too deep and too real to vent itself in those noisy hand-clappings which it commonly requires so little to inspire, were the best assurance of the best kind of success. Should no more hundreds come up to the rescue of true music, the memory of these twelve shall remain sweet as that of Tennyson's "six hundred."

We do not hesitate to pronounce the concert, as a whole, about the best one of its kind that ever has been given in our city. There was a unity and completeness in the programme, an absence of all that was trivial and hacknied, a well-contrasted variety, and an abounding richness and brilliancy and piquancy in the selections which made the most solid fare enjoyable and stimulating and nourishing. There was but one opinion, one feeling, in the audience; all were delighted; all pronounced that it was good to be there. No one, after that experience, has the right to say that "lighter music" would have pleased the audience better. The most taking melody of witching waltz and sentimental song would have proved tedious and heavy, after the bracing stimulus and never disappointing fascination of that so-called "classical" BETHOVEN symphony.

The execution was in the main worthy of the selections. The new orchestra of fifty-four musicians was larger, more select and better balanced than we have ever had before—leaving, of course, JULIEN's out of the comparison. Eight first and eight second violins, with six each of violas, cellos and double basses, were a fine ground-work for an orchestra. There is truth in the remark, certainly, that half as many more of violins would have made the balance much more perfect. But we had all the good violins that were attainable—certainly all that the Boston public has as yet shown itself disposed to pay for. That the basses were too powerful we do not agree with some critics; we doubt if six double basses would drown a single violin; if the strings could not be strengthened sufficiently in the upper parts, it was still well that they should be in the lower, helping the whole family of strings to withstand the outside barbarian pressure of the brass. Let our public do its duty by this orchestra, and it will naturally attain to full growth and symmetry by another year. We liked Mr. ZERRAHN's arrangement of his forces; the violins facing inward on each side of him, flanked by cellos and contrabassi at each end, with violas, cellos and basses again behind, forming a wall of basses round the strings or heart of the orchestra, while the wind band occupied a sort of extramural place behind all. Would that it were not also above all! for we cannot but think our Berlin correspondent right in the idea that drums and trombones, placed upon the same level close behind the strings, would come sifted through them with a mellow

and less disturbing sound, than in the usual arrangement, where they ring out from a clear height over the heads of all the softer instruments. Mr. Zerrahn's arrangement, however, was excellent for such a stage, and quite imposing to the eye. It was soon apparent that a great deal had been accomplished in the two weeks of rehearsal. What was wanting here and there in fine precision of detail was made up in telling general effect, and in the way in which the spirit of each composition was essentially brought out.

First came that wonder-work of instrumental composition, the Seventh Symphony of BETHOVEN, in A. Never have we heard it here, familiar as it is, when it has seemed both so great and so new. It was in the main admirably played.—Not that there were no faults; but these were scarcely thought of in the power and breadth and beauty, in the light and shade, the spirit of the whole rendering. There was some slight swerving from the pitch, at first, in some of the brass instruments, coming as they did from a cold into a warm room. There were little blurs and draggings now and then in single instruments in the first Allegro, while the general tempo of the movement seemed, if any thing, a shade too fast. It detracted a little from its full swelling joyfulness, sweeping all things into its own lyrical, exalted, happy movement—for joy is the key-note of the seventh symphony as much almost as of the ninth; but joy of a soul how deep, how great, how knowing to great depths of suffering! In that mysterious second movement, Allegretto, too, which seems like a fond lingering in the memory of old glooms and trials for the sake of the wonderful resolution that follows into that strain of celestial peace and sunshine,—the sweeter that the sad sub-basses still throb through the strain—the tempo was a little fast. The Scherzo, which is the very bounding, musical pulse of joy, joy spiritually conscious of itself in every vein and every fibre, and anon fainting into ecstasy, was taken just right and most satisfactorily rendered. But here again, when it came to that sublime episode—perhaps the sublimest in all instrumental music, where that A of the violins sustains its level height throughout the whole, until the trumpet takes it up—a passage which we never hear suddenly occurring in the midst of that wild merriment, without thinking of "And the heavens opened," for you are in a new sphere, encompassed by eternal glories—here again, especially, we felt the time too fast; the simple, solemn grandeur of the passage held back of itself ere long, establishing its own movement. The jubilant finale was taken at the right time; it could scarcely be too fast; and if in the leading violin phrase of the melody the ear continually caught only the accented notes, and lost the notes between, it was but an instance of the want of a still larger mass of violins. As often as we have heard this symphony, we do not remember a time when the effect of this passage was not partly lost. And yet, in spite of all this, we must thank Mr. Zerrahn and his orchestra for giving us a new sense of the beauty and the greatness of this inimitable work.—Long will it ring in the soul of many an auditor of that night, inspiring nobler faith and worthier aims through life.

Two pieces were now sung by Mrs. J. H. LONG. First the Recitative and Romanza: *Selva opaca*, from the second act of "William Tell," recalling the Matilde of STEFFANONE. Both were execut-

ed to a charm, considering that she had but one rehearsal with the orchestra; and it was the first time that this young native vocalist, whose voice and talent have been much admired by all who knew her, has been placed in so important a position before the really musical public. Her voice, improved since we last heard her, is a soprano of good compass, of mezzo soprano richness, very musical and telling, resonant in every part of that great hall, and capable of much dramatic power. It is not equally and always rich, some of the loud notes sounding a little pinched and hard, like a pinched reed; but the half voice is always beautiful, and some of the highest tones were held out to the vanishing point with exquisite beauty. Few lovelier or nobler melodies could have been chosen, and it received good justice from the singer, and was crowned with very general and sincere applause. Turning then to the piano, Mr. DRESEL accompanying, she sang Shakespeare's "Hark, the Lark!" to music full of ecstasy and day dawn as the poem, by FRANZ SCHUBERT. Shakespeare knew the beauty of his little song, and must have had Schubert's music in his mind's ear when he introduced it there in "Cymbeline."—Here is the passage:

Chorus—I would this music would come. I am advised to give her music 'o mornings; they say, it will penetrate.

[Enter musicians.]

Come on; tune. If you penetrate her with your fingering, so; we'll try with tongue too; if none will do, let her remain; but I'll never give o'er. First, a very excellent good conceited thing; a'ter, a wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich words,—and then let her consider.

SONG.

Hark, hark, the Lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs,
On chaliced flowers that lies.
And winking marybuds begin
To ope their golden eyes;
With ev'ry thing that pretty bin,
My lady sweet, arise!

This little song, of scarcely two minutes' length, would have been felt and remembered as a moment's ecstasy in the midst of greater things, could it have been fairly heard. Never were words and tones more happily wedded; the accompaniment is full of larks. But the singer was hardly so happy in this piece; the ecstasy was wanting, there were some little sins against the faultless beauty of the words, and moreover, coming directly after a song with orchestra, it was too short to win the audience fairly over to its mood.

RICHARD WAGNER's overture to *Tannhäuser*, the much admired and much hated, but generally from the first admired in Boston, was splendidly played, employing all the extra brass and Janissary forces of the orchestra. It was the first time we had heard it in any thing like its full proportions, and even now the want of a still larger body of violins was felt in those reiterated, strong accompanying figures. The low reed tones in the opening theme were true and beautiful, and rich and warm as mellow sunset was the passage where the violins flowed in above them. At the climax of the *diablerie* of the Venus Mount, the tumult of passion was indeed terrible, swelled by the colossal *Bombardine*, a monster of the Sax family, of a civil though remarkably sonorous tone. So much the more beautiful was the return of the religious Pilgrim strain, and the finale was sublime.

MENDELSSOHN's delicious Piano Concerto in G minor, developed beauties, points of strength and

delicacy, which we had never observed before, in the conscientious, finished and poetic rendering of OTTO DRESEL. A select orchestra conspired well with him, so that it came out a clear poetic whole, full of unity and of beauty. It was received with enthusiastic applause, and nothing but the disappearance of the player the instant the last chord was struck, prevented a repetition. Mr. D. seems to have conquered that nervousness which was all that ever interfered with his appearing what he was, our best interpreter of classical piano music. Yet the large concert room is not the peculiar sphere of talent such as his.

The only blemish in the programme, that is the only mere parade piece, was the Cavatina: *In questo semplice*, from DONIZETTI's "Betty;"—a sparkling little *tra la la* affair, to show off the bright high notes of the voice; and that (as our readers know,) had to be adopted at short notice in place of the duet from "Tell," because the orchestral parts could not be had. Mrs. Long sang it well, but the accompaniments had not been sufficiently rehearsed. The applause, which in ordinary concerts follows such trifles chiefly, was, to the credit of the audience, moderate. It is a pleasure to be able to associate so fine a talent as Mrs. Long's with music so much better as the romance from "Tell." The never-failing favorite, the overture to *Fredschütz*, was most effectively performed throughout. The quartet of horns was beautiful, and the precision and energy of the finale all that could be desired.

The impression of that concert, as a whole, will not soon be forgotten. It cannot but awaken a more general desire among our citizens to share the pleasure of the remaining concerts.

The Don Quixote of Opera.

CROTCHETS AND QUAYERS: OF *Recollections of an Opera Manager in America*. By MAX MARETEK. New York: S. French. (Sold by Redding & Co., Boston.)

The "indefatigable Max" has written a book! and a wittier, saner, more entertaining and romantic book, although it deals professedly with facts, we have not read for many a day. It will afford many a good laugh, and not a little valuable information; for it is in fact the history of Italian Opera in this country for the seven years in which Maretzek has borne a leading part in it as manager or as conductor: a period embracing about all our important opera seasons, from the famous Havana troupe to these days of the New York Academy. Verily another seven years' war! Max turns the opera inside out, takes us behind the scenes, shows us the difficulties that beset the managerial path, the foibles, the intrigues, and almost incredible perversities and jealousies of those spoiled children of the pleasure-seeking public, the Italian opera singers. The story is humiliating, but it is also very entertaining.—Whether Max wrote it to pay off old scores, and get sympathy by showing the world what a wild beast menagerie he has had to manage; or to revenge himself on rival managers, some of whom he hits very hardly; or whether he did it from the mere humor of the thing, (for the tone of the book is laughing and good-natured,) we cannot say. It is not more vain and egotistical than such "Confessions" always are; and it is more amusing and instructive than the most of them. The book abounds in anecdotes and personalities, which the public will find piquant, though the parties interested may esteem them libellous. Max certainly has had enough to try the patience of a saint, and if he lets the spirit of retaliation go no farther than good-humored satire, he deserves the credit of a philosopher. His

portraits of the principal singers who have figured on the American stage are lively and in the main correct, though sometimes terribly severe. His portrait of the public, too, the fashionable New York public in particular, one must own true. He is not always just to persons, and there is no telling how far he has given to each history the coloring most favorable to himself. The book is exceedingly well written, in a fluent, easy style, and shows the literary talent of a very clever feuilletonist. We did not know that Maretzek possessed such; but he alludes to his early classical education in Vienna, and that he had some aid in writing it he confesses when he says he took with him to Staten Island for this summer task an English dictionary and grammar with an English friend. Of the style and happy temper of the volume, take the following passage from the Preface as a specimen. Alluding to the fact that he has been called the "Napoleon of Opera," he declines the title and accepts that of its "Don Quixote," though whether his career has been as disinterested as that worthy knight's is open to conjecture. He proceeds:

As far as concerns my operative and musical Don Quixotism, I can, however, scarcely be said that I arrived in the United States by any means too late. On the contrary, little in the shape of Italian Opera had previously been attempted here. My naturalization in this part of the world has, in all probability, been a trifle too early. At all events, until the advent of my Cervantes, I accept right willingly the title of the "Don Quixote of Opera" in America. My Dulcinea del Toboso has been the Art of Music. As for my Rosinante, who can doubt but that this was indispensible the patronage of "Upper Tendom"—a meagre and lazy mare who would not go ahead, in spite of corn and spurs. My agents were veritable Sancho Panzas. They looked after their own interests, and while I was absorbed in the dream of my Dulcinea, kept their eyes wide open and most unpoetically fixed upon the possible loaves and fishes. Many first tenors were there, whom I had fancied giants, that turned out to be nothing but wind-mills, while the *prime donne*, who had been rated by me as faithful maids of honor to my Dulcinea, proved too often to be but little better than dairy-maids; and the enemies whom I had to encounter, not unfrequently exhibited themselves, ere the conclusion of the combat, as mere Italian barbers or hotel-waiters in disguise.

The book consists of a series of letters addressed to distinguished impresarios and artists in Europe. The first, to HECTOR BERLIOZ, describes his arrival and first year's conductor-ship at the Astor Place opera house, in 1848, while the enterprise was in the hands of Mr. E. P. Fry. We do not think that he does justice to that gentleman, nor does he help his own cause in the eyes of all good men by his express leanings to the *N. Y. Herald*. He gives a humorous relation of the TRUFFI and BENEDETTI conspiracy, which defeated Mr. Fry's too sanguine efforts. We quote his sketches of these favorite artists:

The Signora Truffi was a lady singularly prepossessing in her appearance, and of the most distinguished manners. Had you looked on her abundant fair hair, and sunned yourself for a moment in the glance of her bright and azure eyes, you would rather have believed her some sentimental mailden from Northern Germany, than an Italian *Prima Donna*. Judged simply as an artist, she was one of that kind which seldom falls upon the ear, but never electrifies the soul of the listener. She rendered certain parts which do not admit of a *fiasco*, such as *Elcira* in the "Ernani," and *Lucrezia Borgia*, well, carefully avoiding all she imagined might not suit her capacity. In quality her voice was a rich *soprano*, and she had considerably augmented its register by a careful musical cultivation.

Benedetti had a manly and robust figure. Indomitable, energetic, quarrelsome as a gentleman who has recently come from the South of Ireland, conceited with the inevitable self approval of a first tenor, and cunning as either a monk or a weasel, he possessed a strong voice. Its degree of cultivation was extremely mediocre. Did he chance to sing a false note, or commit an error in intonation, he would look daggers at some unoffending member of the orchestra, or if the humor seized him, publicly rebuke an

innocent member of the chorus, for the purpose of inducing the public to believe that one or other of them had dragged him into a false key. Whenever he could not keep time, he had the trick of beginning to beat it himself, although he literally never knew the difference between a six-eight and a two-four movement. This was for the purpose of showing the audience that the fault, supposing they discerned it, lay with the conductor. You may imagine that such a vocalist was an almost priceless tenor. Yet he, for so Mr. Fry had told me, was a favorite with the public.

The second letter, to M. FIORENTINO, of Paris, shows up the New York "Upper Tendom" and the net amount of its supposed liberal support of opera. Some queer features are revealed. And there is some good criticism here as elsewhere on MOZART and other great and small composers. We cannot forbear quoting Max's testimony to the paying popularity (so often questioned by newspaper critics) of "Don Giovanni." He says:

The Opera of "Don Giovanni" brought me support from all classes, and attracted persons of all professions and every description to the Opera House. Fourteen consecutive evenings it played to crowded houses. This opera, alone, enabled me to conclude the season and satisfy all demands made upon my exchequer.

Nor is this the first time Mozart's matchless master-piece has saved some poor devil of a manager from ruin. It is truly wonderful how, not only the music, but the mere plot of this Opera, interests the public, in all and every country in which it may be performed.

And again:

To prove this, let me tell you that the "Don Giovanni" had the greatest success of any Opera which has been brought forward, in my time, in America. This argues, as you must admit, well for the public taste in this portion of the world, and promises even more for their future musical development. Everybody was delighted. Even a little mercantile acquaintance of mine, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Opera, and had a positive standing among amateurs, as a man of recognized judgment in musical matters, was literally carried away. Upon the first night, when the Opera had come to an end, he scarcely seemed to know whether he stood upon his head or his heels. My step was not heard in the lobby, ere he rushed up to me like a diminutive madman. Grasping both my hands in his, and shaking them with a very painful fervor to myself, he there and then gave me his opinion about Mozart. It was delivered by him in these terms:

"My dear Mr. Max! That music of Mozart's! A-h-h-h! Oh-h-h-h! Indeed—I nev-v-v-ver!"

Letter third is addressed to LABLACHE, and is devoted to the period of the *LIXX* *furor*, and a sharp criticism of BARNUM'S Autobiography; in the course of which our author naïvely confesses his own attempt (he is "prond to say, the only time") to practise the Barnum method in manufacturing a reputation for PARODI. In the next letter he recalls his own earlier years; describes the successful opera managers in Europe, and then passing to Don FRANCESCO MARTI, of Havana, introduces the famous STEFFANONE, BOSIO, SALVI, BADIALI troupe. He appreciates the artists, but is terribly severe upon them personally, particularly SALVI.

A letter to BALFE, in London, exposes the tricks of humbugging "musical agents" in America, a class of unprincipled adventurers called into existence by the dazzling speculation of Barnum. For this Max deserves public thanks. He then speaks of CATHERINE HAYES. LOLA MONTEZ has a place too.—And the opera at Niblo's leads him into a critical comparison of MEYERBEER'S and ROSSINI'S music. His operative adventures in Mexico, told in a letter to Mr. GYE, of London, form a tale almost as romantic as "Arabian Nights." How much is fact and how much fable we have no means of knowing, but few modern novels offer a chapter more amusing.

To CARL ECKERT, of Vienna, he addresses what he has to say about the enterprise of Mme. SONTAG, whose manager or agent he spares not. Finally, in a "postscript to the public" Max gives his criticism upon the construction and management, thus far, of

the New York Academy of Music,—a chapter full of instruction, and not particularly encouraging to those who hope to make Italian Opera a permanent institution in our cities.

Mr. Maretzek appears, on the whole, to like American life and character, if he does amuse himself (and us) somewhat wittily at our expense, upon the side of our artistic aspirations and pretensions.

CONCERT OF MR. AND MRS. LEACH.—A charming little "quiet concert" of old-fashioned English music was given on Friday evening of last week, in the Meisson, by these accomplished singers, with the aid of Mr. ARTHURSON, and of Mr. HAYTER, senior, as accompanist. The selections from HANDEL'S "Acis and Galatia," too seldom heard among us, were particularly interesting, and had excellent interpreters. Mr. Arthurson's singing of "Where shall I seek," and "Love sounds the alarm," was in his best style. Mr. LEACH, with his finely cultivated, though not powerful, bass, is a master of such songs as "Oh ruddier than the cherry," and made the jealous rage of Polyphemus quite effective in the exquisite Trio: "The flocks shall leave the mountains." Mrs. Leach, too, is more satisfactory in this kind of music than in oratorio; her manner is graceful and modest, and she was warmly applauded in "As when the Dove." The scena from "Frey-schütz," however, did not seem exactly in her sphere. The Trio, "This magic wave sear," from BARNES'S "Mountain Sylph" is one of the most pleasing pieces of light English concerted music, and was charmingly sung. Very quaint and curious was the florid old duet: "Haste my Nannette," by TRAVERS, sung by Messrs. Arthurson and Leach. The latter gentleman revealed a fine comic talent in an English version of Figaro's song; and Mr. Arthurson surprised us by an extravaganza à la JONX PARRY and HATTON, to-wit "Fayre Rosamond," which he sang, recited and accompanied on the piano with much gusto.

We are glad to see that these clever singers have formed a "Vocal Quartet" by the acquisition of the charming contralto, Miss TWICHELL, and announce a varied programme for this evening. We trust it will prove but the beginning of a successful series.

HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY.—The second performance of "Solomon" was unfortunate in weather.—A severe storm thinned both audience and chorus, especially the female parts. Yet the oratorio went off with spirit, and several of the solos were better than before. Some reduction had been made in its length by the further omission of a chorus, and a few songs and recitative. It might be abridged still further to advantage; the whole of the dramatic scene, of the two women and the trio, although the music rewards study, is ineffective without more accompaniment and very superior singers, and could well be spared. The choruses improve upon acquaintance, and even under the circumstances went finely. "Solomon" will be given again to-morrow night, and we urge every one to hear it.

THE MUSICAL EDUCATION SOCIETY.—The first concert of the season took place in the Meisson on Monday evening; Mr. ZERRAHN conducting, Mr. MUELLER accompanying at the piano. The programme was rather a singular medley of the grandest and the lightest. The first part comprised two of HANDEL'S great chorusses from "Jephtha," followed by a VERDI barcarolle, an air by LEE: Hark, the "nightingale," with flute obligato, sung by Mrs. HILL, and a romanza by AUER: "Young Agnes," sung by Mr. ARTHURSON. These we lost, but heard the second part, which consisted of a variety of vocal sugar plums, songs by very young ladies furiously applauded by young gentlemen, and so forth, packed between two great Handelian chorusses. The chorusses, from the "Messiah": *All we like sheep*, and *The glory of the Lord*, were sung by a large, well balanced and well drilled choir, with good unity and precision, though with a certain hardness of sound, which perhaps would become mellowed in a larger hall. But why so slow a time, particularly in a chorus of so much natural momentum, as *All we like sheep have gone astray*? We think these concerts may be made highly interesting and improving, but would suggest that the smaller miscellany of the programme was not up to the character of last year's concerts. Some songs, a little less incongruous with the chorusses, and above all some good quartets and trios would leave a better impression of the whole.

Musical Chit-Chat.

Our advertising columns show a formidable array of coming Concerts. To-night the "Vocal Quartet," of which elsewhere....To-morrow night "Solomon" again....Monday night, (rumor says) there will be light English opera, to wit, "The Devil's Bridge," in which ADELAIDE PHILLIPS is to sing....Tuesday night, the MENDELSSOHN QUINTETTE CLUB, with the aid of Mr. G. W. PRATT....Saturday next, the second ORCHESTRAL CONCERT (not "Orchestral Union," as some papers have it) with another brilliant programme....Sunday, the 9th, the "Messiah," with portions of "St. Paul," by the MENDELSSOHN CHORAL SOCIETY. Music-loving visitors could not tune their visits to this city better than just now.

The letter of our New York correspondent came too late for the printer this Thanksgiving week. It will be good another week, and, meanwhile, we have an interesting letter from another source.

ROSSINI, as the newspapers have told us, fled from Paris, in the summer, to the sea-shore resort of Trouville. There he met an old friend, one of the first of living German musicians, FERDINAND HILLER, whose most interesting report of conversations with the maestro we commenced translating in our last. Let no one omit to read them. Some will open their eyes when they see how the great Italian talks about the mooted question of Italian and German music. PALESTRINA and ROSSINI are the two great musical names of Italy! are they not its opposite poles—as opposite as possible?

Our enterprising contemporaries of the *Musical Review* publish in their last number the first of the eight songs, selected by a competent committee, from the hundred or more sent in in competition for the prizes of \$200 and \$100, offered by them for the two best. After all the eight are published, the subscribers to the paper are to award the prize, the polls being kept open till the end of March. If all the eight are half as good as this first candidate, a charming lullaby to Tennyson's "Sweet and low, wind of the western sea," the publishers, who retain the copyrights, will have made an excellent speculation; and if the mass shall award intelligently, they will have helped the cause of Art among us.

Advertisements.

MR. ARTHURSON

RESPECTFULLY submits the following Programme to his friends and the public, and announces to them that the FIRST CONCERT of the VOCAL QUARTET, assisted by Mr. WULF FRIES, will take place SATURDAY EVENING, Dec. 1st, at the Meisson, Tremont Temple, and will commence at 7½ precisely, and terminate by 9½ o'clock.

PART I.

1. Quartet: See the Chariot at hand.....Horsley.
2. Ballad: Kathleen is gone, (Miss Twitchell,).....Maynard.
3. Duet: As I saw fair Clara, (Mr. Arthurson and Mrs. Leach.)
4. Canonet: My Mother bids me bind my hair, (Mrs. Leach.) Haydn.
5. Solo: Violoncello, (Mr. Wulf Fries,).....Beethoven
6. French Romance: My soul to God, my heart to thee, (Mr. Arthurson) Clappon.
7. Quartet: Ye spotted snakes,.....Stevens.

PART II.

8. Song: The Wanderer, (Mr. Leach,).....Schubert.
9. Duet: When thy bosom heaves a sigh, (Mrs. Leach and Mr. Arthurson.) Brahms.
10. Trio: Turn on old time, (Miss Twitchell, Mr. Leach, and Mr. Arthurson.) Wallace.
11. Song: The Nightingale, with Violoncello Obligato, by Mr. Wulf Fries, (Mrs. Leach,).....Zeller.
12. Quartet: Here in cool grove,.....Lord Mornington.
13. Extravaganza: Blue Bird, (by request.) A tale of Infantine History, (Mr. Arthurson.) John Parry.

Mr. HAYTER will preside at the Piano Forte.
Single Tickets 50 cents—to admit three, \$1, at music stores.

HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY.

THIRD CONCERT OF THE SERIES.

HANDEL'S ORATORIO, SOLOMON, will be repeated on SUNDAY EVENING, Dec. 2nd, at the Music Hall, with the same vocal assistance as at the previous performances.

On account of the unfavorable weather at the second Concert, tickets numbered two of the regular series will be received on this evening. Members of the Choir are requested to be in attendance at 6½ o'clock.

Tickets 50 cents each—may be obtained at the principal Music Stores and Hotels.

Doors open at 6; to commence at 7 o'clock.
H. L. HAZELTON, Secretary.

CHAMBER CONCERTS.—Seventh Series.

THE MENDELSSOHN QUINTETTE CLUB'S SECOND CONCERT will take place on TUESDAY EVENING, Dec. 4, at Messrs. CHICKERING'S ROOMS, (Marion Temple,) assisted by GEORGE W. PRATT, Vocalist. Mr. Pratt will sing the Prayer by Alessandro Stradella, and the "Song to the Evening Star," from the Tannhäuser. Beethoven's Quartette in G, first time,—Mendelssohn's Quartette in E minor,—Mozart's Quintette in E flat, etc. will be presented.

Tickets for the series of Eight, (used at pleasure,) \$5. Single tickets \$1 each. Concert will commence at 7½ precisely.

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With the assistance of

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Conductor.....CARL ZERRAHN.

PROGRAMME.

PART I.

1. Symphony No. 3, in A minor, op. 56, (Scottish Recllections,).....Mendelssohn.
2. Aria from "Zauberflöte,".....Mozart.
Sung by Mr. ARTHURSON.
3. Overture to "Leonora,".....Beethoven.

PART II.

1. Overture to "William Tell,".....Rossini.
2. Scena from second act of "William Tell" including
a. Romanza (by request,) sung by Mrs. J. H. LONG.
b. Duet, by Mrs. LONG and Mr. ARTHURSON.
3. Finaie from first act of "Don Juan," (Orchestra,).....Mozart.

Tickets Fifty Cents each, to be obtained at the usual places. Also, in sets of six, good for any of the remaining concerts, at \$2.50 per set.
Doors open at 6½. Commence at 7½ o'clock.

MENDELSSOHN CHORAL SOCIETY.

HANDEL'S "MESSIAH," (excepting only the least interesting portions,) and a selection of several gems from Mendelssohn's "St. Paul," will be performed on SUNDAY EVENING, DEC. 9, by the Mendelssohn Choral Society, at TREMONT TEMPLE. The Society will be assisted by Miss ADELAIDE PHILLIPS, Mrs. J. H. LONG, Mr. A. ARTHURSON, and Mr. J. Q. WETHERBEE, Vocalists; Mr. W. R. BABCOCK, Organist, and a full Orchestra, Mr. H. ECKHARDT, Conductor. Tickets 50 cents each, at usual places; also at the office of the Journal of Music.

MERRILL N. BOYDEN, SECRETARY.

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